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**RED LION CHEF LEADS CULINARY PROGRAM FOR YOUTH
RSYP's Culinary Arts Program Dinner Fundraiser to be Held at The Red Lion Inn**

Stockbridge, MA (For immediate release) Brian J. Alberg, the Executive Chef at the historic Red Lion Inn, believes that kids deserve a taste of the real world—of the culinary arts. For the past four years, Alberg has been working with the Railroad Street Youth Project (RSYP) on the Youth Culinary Arts Program, which gives participants, often at-risk youth, the opportunity to gain valuable job experience working alongside a professional chef—cooking sophisticated food for guests, not just doing dishes. As one of the largest segments of the local Berkshire economy, the hospitality industry provides a typical introduction into the workforce for many local kids, who start out as bussers and dishwashers to the area's restaurants and hotels.

On November 16, at The Red Lion Inn, Railroad Street Youth Project will celebrate the conclusion of its fall 2009 Culinary Arts class. Now in its sixth semester, the Culinary Arts program has introduced over 50 young people to the culinary field in a practical, hands-on way. The program gives participants an advantage in the restaurant industry should they choose to pursue a career in the culinary arts. RSYP's Culinary Arts program has been featured on *Good Morning America* and Bobby Flay's *Grill It*. The class is broken down into 8-week courses and runs twice a year. The program is open to young people ages 14-25 at no charge. The winter semester begins February 8, 2010, and enrollment efforts are underway.

“The Fall 2009 Culinary Arts program is off to an awesome start. The participants are very eager to learn and we are expecting some great things this year. I am very excited to be working with such a worthwhile program!” said Marla Robertson, the new RSYP Mentoring Programs Director.

Led by Brian Alberg, the graduates of RSYP's introductory class gain first-hand experience in menu design and food preparation. Alberg, who graduated from The Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, has overseen a number of high profile kitchens in the Berkshire area, made several appearances at the James Beard House, and has been Executive Chef at The Red Lion Inn since July 2004.

“The hospitality industry is a huge part of the Berkshire economy,” states Alberg. “This program exposes kids to the culinary arts, kids who may be at-risk or just in need of some direction in life. It's important to give them a chance to get to know how creative and exciting the food and beverage industry is while helping them jump-start their resume. Even if they don't pursue a career in the culinary arts, at least they will have had

the chance to satisfy their curiosity about it while gaining valuable job skills like planning, organization and time management.” The following menu items will be prepared by the students following a reception featuring local artisan cheeses and breads: Butternut Squash Bisque with Toasted Pepitas & Truffled High Lawn Cream; Farm Girl Baby Winter Green Risotto with Berkshire Pork Bratwurst; Equinox Farm Arugula Salad with Pears, Walnuts, Berkshire Blue & Fig Vinaigrette; Braised Pasture Raised Short Ribs with Hilltop Cider, Barrington Ale & Poached Turnips; Pumpkin Cheesecake with Gingerbread Crust & Ioka Maple Cream.

For the November 16th event, Alberg will work in conjunction with invited guest chefs Daire Rooney of BRIX Wine Bar and Brian Ruffner of Gedney Farm to lead the students for the final dinner. All chefs who participate in the program donate their time and special ingredients for their dishes and work alongside the students in the kitchen. As a result of the chef/student collaboration, the dinner is always expertly executed and enjoyed by all in attendance.

Tickets are on sale now for the final dinner which takes place at 5:30pm on November 16th at The Red Lion Inn and will feature a five-course meal, passed hors d’oeuvres and a graduation for the students. Ticket price is \$100/person, which includes wine, and may be reserved by calling The Red Lion Inn at 413-298-5545 or www.redlioninn.com. As an additional fundraiser for the program, RSYP will conduct a raffle drawing at the dinner for a one-week stay for 10 at a house in Provence, France. Raffle tickets are on sale now at RSYP for \$30/each or 4 for \$100.

The Railroad Street Youth Project began as a response to a series of drug and alcohol-related deaths in 1999 that forced the community to face the fact that southern Berkshire County had a serious heroin problem. Fed up with attending friends’ funerals, Amanda Root, a 19-year-old high school dropout, began attending meetings of concerned citizens who called themselves the Heroin Task Force and Prevention Council. The group of parents, police officers, business people and other community leaders met to figure out what to do about the problem that had been lurking in their community for far too long. They came up with a long list of goals to help to curb the problem and prevent it from getting any worse. Before long, the Railroad Street Youth Project had been created to face youth problems head-on. Amanda soon secured a small office space on Railroad Street and was working hard to create projects and performances that involved the community. Today, RSYP is a fully formed non-profit organization, still working to help young people do the things they want to do and is run by a staff of young people with the help of an executive board and a youth operational board that meets weekly.

A charter member of Historic Hotels of America, The Red Lion Inn has been providing food and lodging to guests for more than two centuries. It offers 108 antique-filled rooms and suites, formal and casual dining with an emphasis on contemporary regional specialties, a pub with nightly entertainment, a year-round heated outdoor pool and hot tub (with radiant-heated patio), and free WiFi. The flagship Country Curtains store and The Red Lion Inn gift shop are located at the Inn. For more information or to make reservations, visit www.redlioninn.com or call (413) 298-5545.

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